****

**How to…. keep in touch with a member of staff on family leave**

Family leave can include maternity leave, adoption leave or shared parental leave, as well as agreed time off such as a career break for the purpose of spending time with or caring for family.

Managers are encouraged to make reasonable contact with staff on family leave. It is good practice to agree the method and frequency of contact prior to the leave commencing. Some individuals may want close contact, others much less frequent communication so that they can focus entirely on their leave.

Managers should consider:

* Discussing what sort of information the member of staff wants to receive. For example, details on conferences, events or social occasions, minutes of team meetings, updates on particular projects or pieces of work.
* Sending copies of newsletters or magazines to the member of staff at home, especially if they are normally only available on StaffNet which the individual may not be accessing.
* Ensuring the member of staff is aware that they can take ‘Keeping in Touch’ Days. Staff on family leave may attend work for up to ten days during their leave period, and be paid at their normal rate. These days can be used for any purpose that will help them keep in touch with the workplace or colleagues.
* Agreeing a suitable time to have contact in advance of the expected return date, to effectively plan the return to work.
* Facilitating occasional contact (if desired by the member of staff) with the person covering their role or responsibilities.

Staff should always be notified of any other roles that arise during their leave that they may be interested in applying for. This could be as simple as sending them an email with a link to the role on the website.

The most important factor is not forgetting about the member of staff when they are not present in the workplace.